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# DEM orders landfill closed in Cranston

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PROVIDENCE — The state Department of Environmental Management (DEM) has ordered Sanitary Landfill Inc. — which runs a 46-acre dump on Pontiac Avenue, Cranston — to cease operations next Saturday because the firm has missed two deadlines for correcting water pollution at the dump.

The landfill serves 80,000 residential customers in Cranston and another 1,000 commercial customers.

The company has applied for a stay of the order and will meet with DEM officials Tuesday to discuss the issue.

DEM Director W. Edward Wood

signed the order Thursday, making it effective Aug. 16 to give the city of Cranston and Sanitary Landfill's other customers time to find other places for their trash. There are 16 other state-licensed landfills in Rhode Island, a DEM spokesman said.

The DEM's primary concern with the Cranston dump has been groundwater contamination, especially by hazardous industrial chemical wastes. The company — managed by the Capuano brothers, Jack, Daniel and Anthony — has been cited for 28 violations of state regulations regarding landfill operation.

AFTER A SERIES of hearings last

year, the DEM ordered the company to regrade and resurface parts of the dump by July 1 to reduce infiltration of rainwater. That deadline was later extended to July 15.

The agency also ordered Sanitary Landfill Inc. to submit by Aug. 1 a plan for an extensive pollution-control system that would intercept contaminated groundwater. By Sept. 1, the company was to submit further plans describing how the collected groundwater would be treated and disposed of.

The new system was to be operating by next Jan. 1. If all conditions were met, DEM was to issue the firm a one-year operating license. Sanitary Landfill Inc. has been operating without a license since June, 1978, when its license expired.

R. Daniel Prentiss, DEM's chief counsel, last night said that the company "ignored" the July 15 and Aug. 1 deadlines. Although the firm did submit a

plan on Aug. 1, Prentiss said it was "the same thing that had been rejected during the May hearings: They asked permission to collect the leachate (accumulated groundwater) and simply dump it back on top of the landfill, and that was just not acceptable."

About 450 tons of refuse are dumped at the site each day, according to the DEM.

Prentiss acknowledged that closing the dump may cause inconvenience and additional expense to the city of Cranston, but added, "We had no choice in the matter. The groundwater there stinks. That order was based on a lot of testimony, and they've chosen simply to ignore it."

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DURING LAST YEAR'S hearings, DEM officials testified that their tests of the site disclosed contamination of a

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## Dump

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stream running beside the landfill and of groundwater running beneath it. The stream flows into the Pawtuxet River, which empties into Narragansett Bay.

Among the chemicals identified by DEM investigators were toluene, trichloroethylene and xylene, "all considered hazardous at low concentrations," according to Sean O. Coffey, who handed down the DEM's original set of orders last May 30.

If the DEM rejects the company's request for a stay of the order, the firm may try to have the order stayed in court.

Superfund Records Center

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SDMS DocID 584028